

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 7447

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TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TW, CH

SUBJECT: REACTION TO FORD VISIT ANNOUNCEMENT: DOWN-ISLAND VIEWS

REF: TAIPEI 7271

1. SUMMARY. THERE APPEARS TO BE SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE IN REACTIONS DOWN-ISLAND AND THOSE IN TAIPEI AREA TO ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO PEKING NEXT YEAR, AS WELL AS WITH REGARD FUTURE DIRECTION OF ROC/US RELATIONS. TAIWANESE GOVT OFFICIALS, BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY LEADERS AND OTHERS WITH WHOM EMBOFFS SPOKE DURING FOUR DAY DOWN ISLAND VISIT FREELY EXPRESSED VERY DEEP CONCERN. THIS WAS NOT DIRECTED TOWARD FORD VISIT OR US RECOGNITION OF PRC PER SE, WHICH ALMOST ALL VIEWED AS INEVITABLE, BUT TOWARD POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS US WOULD MAKE AFTER RECOGNITION TOOK PLACE. SPECIFIC CONCERNS FOCUSED ON LEVEL OF US REPRESENTATION FOLLOWING RECOGNITION AND DURABILITY OF SECURITY GUARANTEE. THESE WERE SEEN AS LINKED ITEMS, WITH PRESENCE OF EMBASSY NECESSARY IN ORDER CONTINUE MAINTAIN SECURITY TREATY.
END SUMMARY.

2. REFTEL SUGGESTED THERE MIGHT BE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TAIPEI AND DOWN-ISLAND REACTIONS TO ANNOUNCEMENT THAT PRESIDENT FORD WILL VISIT PRC NEXT YEAR, AND THAT THIS
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MIGHT REFLECT A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMUNITIES IN WHICH

MAINLANDER OPINION SETS THE TONE AND THOSE IN WHICH TAIWANESE OPINION IS DOMINANT. ON BASIS OF FOUR-DAY VISIT BY EMBOFFS TO KAOHSIUNG, TAINAN AND TAICHUNG, IT APPEARS THERE ARE INDEED STRONG DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RE-ACTIONS OF TAIWANESE IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN TAIWAN, AND MOST PEOPLE (INCLUDING MAINLANDERS AND TAIWANESE) WITH WHOM WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT IN TAIPEI AREA. TAIWAN'S CURRENT ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WERE CLEARLY UPPERMOST IN MINDS OF DOWN-ISLAND TAIWANESE, BUT IN CONTRAST TO ELITES IN TAIPEI AREA WHO HAVE BEEN RELUCTANT TO EXPRESS VIEWS, ALMOST ALL TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO RAISE FORD VISIT WITH EMBOFFS AND TO FREELY EXPRESS DEEP CONCERN OVER FUTURE DIRECTION OF US/ROC RELATIONS. WE EMPHASIZE THAT TAIWANESE WITH WHOM EMBOFFS SPOKE INCLUDED GOVT OFFICIALS, COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS LEADERS, AND OTHERS PLAYING RESPONSIBLE ROLES IN SOCIETY.

3. INTERESTINGLY, ALMOST ALL APPEARED TO BELIEVE US RECOGNITION OF PRC NOT ONLY WAS INEVITABLE, BUT ALSO THAT IT MOST PROBABLY WOULD TAKE PLACE DURING FORD VISIT TO PEKING NEXT YEAR. THEY WERE NOT CONCERNED OVER FORD VISIT OR US RECOGNITION PER SE; BUT THEY WERE UNCERTAIN AND THEREFORE DEEPLY WORRIED ABOUT ARRANGEMENTS US WOULD WORK OUT THEREAFTER WITH RESPECT TO TAIWAN. THEY FOCUSED MOST SPECIFICALLY ON QUESTION OF WHETHER US WOULD MAINTAIN AN AMEMBASSY IN TAIPEI FOLLOWING RECOGNITION OF PRC, VIEWING THIS AS NECESSARY PRE-CONDITION FOR MAINTAINING AN EFFECTIVE AND DURABLE SECURITY GUARANTEE. MOST SEEMED TO CONSIDER THAT GUARANTEE NECESSARILY SHOULD CONTINUE IN TREATY FORM.

4. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, MOST MEMBERS OF THESE DOWN-ISLAND ELITES APPEARED TO BELIEVE THAT US IN FACT WOULD MAINTAIN FULL-FLEDGED EMBASSY IN TAIPEI AND HAD NOT GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO OTHER EVENTUALITIES. MOST EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT US EMBASSIES IN BOTH PEKING AND TAIPEI WOULD LOGICALLY REFLECT PRESENT REALITIES, AND, AS WOULD BE NATURAL FOR TAIWANESE LEADERS, DID NOT AT ALL APPEAR DISCOMFITED THAT THIS WOULD SUGGEST POLITICAL SEPARATION OF TAIWAN FROM MAINLAND. MANY ALSO SAID,
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APPARENTLY BASED ON WHAT THEY THEMSELVES SAW AS LOGICAL, THAT GROC WOULD FIND SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT PREFERABLE TO NO OFFICIAL US PRESENCE AT ALL.

5. FROM THESE CONVERSATIONS, IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT "CONDITIONING PROCESS" DESCRIBED IN PAST MESSAGES HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN DESENSITIZING VIEWS ON SIMPLE QUESTION OF US RECOGNITION OF PRC. ALMOST WITHOUT EXCEPTION,

THOSE WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN DOWN-ISLAND (AND THIS INCLUDES VERY BROAD SPECTRUM) NOT ONLY SEE IT AS INEVITABLE BUT EXPECT IT DURING FORD VISIT. (IN TAIPEI, IT IS ALSO SEEN AS INEVITABLE FOR THE MOST PART, THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY OCCURING DURING FORD VISIT). THIS SUGGESTS POSSIBLE USE OF CONDITIONING PROCESS ALSO IN DEALING WITH THORNY ISSUES FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD RELATIING TO LEVEL OR TYPE OF US PRESENCE AND PERHAPS WITH SECURITY TREATY/SECURITY GUARANTEE QUESTION. UNGER

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